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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (7/22): WESTERN DECLARATIONS THAT
"VAPORIZE IN THE AIR"

Main Stories:

Al Quds and Al Ayyam lead with their daily reports on Israeli operations in the West Bank and Jerusalem. According to all papers, 26 Palestinians, including former Hamas parliamentarian Muna Mansour, were arrested as part of a July 21 incursion into the West Bank city of Nablus. Israeli forces, "invaded dozens of houses, checked them and destroyed their contents," and confiscated computers, according to coverage. Al-Quds leads with a photo of Hamas member Mansour's sons surveying the damage by Israeli forces to their house. Jericho and a village near Hebron were also sites of Israeli activity where local institutions were "invaded," two arrests made and one Palestinian youth injured. In Jerusalem news, Al-Quds continues coverage of the week-long "sit-in" at the house of the Al-Kurd family in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem, following eviction orders by the Israeli Supreme Court. The owner of the house is quoted as saying, "I wouldn't give up my house for all the money in the world."

All dailies highlight official Palestinian reaction to, "Israeli escalation [of operations] in the West Bank and Jerusalem." Palestinian Authority Minister of Information Al-Malki especially condemned ongoing activities in Nablus city and he confirmed in a press conference on July 21 that the Palestinian Authority (PA) Government is following the issue closely and considers the "escalation" to be illegal. Al-Malki also reiterated PA support for the residents of Jerusalem.

Citing Israeli sources, Al-Ayyam leads with a reported "demand" by the U.S. administration to Israeli and Palestinian negotiators that they produce a "written document outlining their achievements" in negotiations, to be presented to the new U.S. president in January 2009.

Al- Ayyam covers news about captured Israeli soldier Shalit. Israeli sources expect that negotiations between Hamas and Israel will resume in the coming few weeks through Egyptian mediation. The sources also revealed that Jimmy Carter has made a proposal to broker a meeting between Hamas, Israel and Egypt to push the prisoner exchange negotiations forward, the paper noted. In related coverage on Al- Ayyam's front page, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyyah confirmed on July 21 that Hamas will not give in on its demands regarding a prisoner release deal with Israel.

Al- Ayyam's front pages highlight Secretary Rice's July 21 meeting with representatives of nine countries in Abu Dhabi. The paper notes that the meeting took place an hour after Rice "threatened Iran with punishment" over its nuclear program if Iran does not "cooperate" in the next two weeks.

Coverage also highlights news about the British Premier Gordon Brown's speech at the Israeli Knesset on July 21 in which he called on Palestinians to fight terrorists and threatened Iran with new sanctions. Al- Ayyam quotes Brown stating that, "achieving peace includes a withdrawal from settlements and a fair solution to the Palestinian refugee cause." Al- Quds quotes Brown asserting that, "peace between Palestinians and Israelis is possible and Jerusalem is the capital of the two cities." In related coverage, Al- Quds reports a spokesperson of the British Consulate General in Jerusalem reiterated to local press on July 21 the message that East Jerusalem is the capital of the future Palestinian state.

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BLOCK QUOTES:

¶1. Al- Quds prints its daily editorial entitled, "Brown's Visit and his Positive Declarations" (7/22): "During his visit to the Palestinian lands and Israel, British Premier Gordon Brown showed positive understanding of the situation and peace demands. He talked frankly and clearly regarding the need to stop the settlement activities in Jerusalem and other places in the West Bank, to facilitate passage into and out of the city, and to open all the closed institutions, such as the Arab Chamber of Commerce. In addition, he referred to the ongoing attempt to find a solution to the 1967 borders ...and announced as well the donation of \$60 million to the Palestinian National Authority, of which \$30 million will be dedicated to the building of housing units and to the creation of 50,000 job opportunities... However, Brown is not the first Western leader who has visited the country and will not be the last, and we always listen to declarations that have vaporized in the air..."

¶2. Al-Ayyam runs an editorial by Muhammad Abdel-Hamid entitled, "Why Don't We Withdraw from the Negotiations?" (7/22): "...What shall we lose if we state that we will continue the negotiations only if Israel shows commitment and fulfills its obligations according to the Road Map? We do not lose anything. On the contrary, the condition of negotiating what has been set by the Quartet and at the Annapolis conference places the [Western] countries between two options: either being biased to the Israeli attitude or respecting international legislation ... The withdrawal from the negotiations is a legal and important attitude to show the Arab and the world the reality of what is going on. And to stress the necessity of intervention and international supervision of international legislation. Withdrawal from the negotiations would mark an important strategy for the Palestinian people that would rebuild national unity, PA institutions, and their international allies."

Walles